SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, WILLIAM PERRY

Address before the Military Staff College,
German Ministry of Defense

September 9, 1994
Hamburg, Germany

Press Questions Before the Address.

Q: [Indistinct: Whether allies would join in any invasion of Haiti or whether the U.S. is prepared to go it alone.]

Dr. Perry: First of all let's say, the United States is capable of launching an invasion by itself, if the President decides to do that. Secondly we have nonetheless been forming a multinational force so there's now the participation of some of the regional countries. And third, in terms of timing and size of the operation, we never discuss the details of an operation like that, so I can't give you an answer to that question.

Q: How do you see relations developing between Germany and the United States in military terms?

Dr. Perry: I see them developing very well, indeed. We had excellent meetings in Berlin yesterday and today. In fact, I was the first minister of defense to receive military honors at the new military headquarters in Berlin, at the Bendler Block. I was quite honored by that. We had important an substantive discussions there today. We will continue those tomorrow. We are cooperating both bilaterally, country to country, in many important areas where we're working together including in the area of armament cooperation, and also we're cooperating together in NATO and in the Partnership of Peace. We discussed all of these aspects yesterday, and we'll continue to discuss them tomorrow.

Q: Mr. Secretary there seems to be disagreement about NATO membership for former Warsaw Pact states. Why do you think they shouldn't join....[indistinct]

Dr. Perry: I don't think we have any disagreement on this issue. In fact we discussed it at some length yesterday the views of both the United States and Germany relative to the expansion of NATO, and I think we're very close in our views -- which is that the countries that are going to be qualified soonest to join NATO are the Visegrad nations. Both Mr. Volker Rühe and I agreed to that, and that that would be some number of years, though, because much preparation is necessary, and the Partnership for Peace will provide the vehicle for that cooperation.

Q: Is there anything that can be done in the short term, though, to strengthen the relationships between eastern Europe and western Europe...anything Germany and the United States can do?

Dr. Perry: Indeed, and that should be done through the Partnership for Peace. That includes joint exercises, joint training. For those nations that want to become members of NATO that involves developing standard procedures, standardizing equipment so that they can become a more effective part of NATO. Also those things take years, and we will be working on those in the years to come. Both Germany and the United States, working individually and through NATO, will be working in that regard.

Q: About former Yugoslavia: will U.S. troops take part as observers in Serbia along the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Dr. Perry: U.S. troops in the former Yugoslavia are involved in a variety of ways. First of all, we have literally thousands of troops involved in the enforcement of the embargo, in the enforcement of the no-fly zone, and providing close air support. That's being not done independently by the U.S. It's being done through NATO forces down there. As I say, we have literally thousands of troops involved there. We have perhaps approximately 500 ground troops, infantry troops, stationed in Macedonia as part of the Nordic Force which is located there. Finally, we have committed ourselves to providing ground peace keeping forces within Bosnia at such time as a peace agreement in Bosnia is reached.

Q: Mr. Secretary, should Germany become a permanent member of the Security Council, and when? [Chuckles]

Dr. Perry: I for one am very anxious to see Germany take its full place among the nations that are involved with the international security aspects of the world. For that to happen is going to involve the expansion of Germany into being able to perform out-of-area operations, peace keeping operations. At such time as Germany is able to assume those responsibilities, the answer to your question, I think, would be "yes", and I believe that should be soon.

Q: The U.S. is already developing a Haitian civilian police force for a time after a possible invasion. How far [along] are these preparations for such a police force?

Dr. Perry: We are working with other nations to develop a multi-national police force. We would hope that an invasion of Haiti will not be necessary and the pressure on the military regime there will cause them to leave without an invasion. In which case the police force will go in at that time. Otherwise, if an invasion is necessary, they will go in after the invasion.

[End text]

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Yesterday I arrived in Berlin to participate in the historic events attendant to the departure of the Allied Forces from Berlin. First thing on my arrival I went to Clay Barracks where we had a ceremony, and I was handed the flag, the last flag, American flag, to fly over Clay Barracks. I can assure you that this flag will occupy a honored spot in my office. We went to the Tempelhof Airport commemorating those who lost their lives in the Berlin Airlift and aside from the ceremonies there I had the opportunity to meet with and talk with many of the British and American pilots who flew in that airlift and came back for the ceremony. We then had a truly memorable military tattoo just in front of the Brandenburg Gate in the what was the East Berlin part, the area in front of the Brandenburg Gate. This was a unique ceremony, it's probably the first, it is the first and probably the only time that memorable military ceremony will be here at the Brandenburg Gate.

Then this morning, I was privileged to be the first Minister of Defense to receive full military honors at the new German military headquarters at Bendelblock in Berlin for which I thank Minister Rühe and also had the opportunity to honor those resistance heroes who were executed at Bendel Block. These ceremonies certainly called to mind a friendship which has built up between the American Forces and the people of Berlin during the many decades in which we occupied the city and indeed I believe this may be the first time in history that the citizens of an occupied city actually shed tears at the time that the occupying troops left the city. It was truly a moving moment for all of us.

At the same time we were conducting these ceremonies, a set of military exercises were under way more than a thousand miles away in Tozskoja in Siberia. This involved elements of the U.S. Third Infantry Division and the Russian Twenty-Seventh Guard Motorized Rifles Division participating in joint exercises of peacekeeping operations. These two events, occurring simultaneously, bring home to us how different the European security environment is as a result of the ending of the Cold War. Allied troops who once stood guard for freedom for decades in Berlin are no longer needed and some of those same allied troops are now in Russia itself conducting peace keeping exercises with the Russian troops that they once opposed. You could hardly find a more powerful symbol of how greatly the world has changed in the last five years. And I want to talk some about that change today.

The great British writer Samuel Johnson once wrote, "Change is inconvenient even when it is for the better." And as I have described these changes to you, I have described changes that were for the better. But I want to tell you also that they are all very inconvenient in terms of trying to manage the affairs of the Defense Department and in terms of the people in the military forces of our nations who are profoundly affected by all of these changes. So one of our major problems is, how do we manage these changes so that they will work out best not only for our nations but for the individuals in our military service who are affected by them. As the Secretary of Defense in the United States, I view my job as one of managing change, and I want to tell you about three different areas in which change is taking place and in which we are trying to effect the optimum management of that change. I am greatly oversimplifying to try to describe the changes going in national security today in just three categories, but these are three categories which loom as very important in my

mind.

The first of these is doing everything we can to prevent the recurrence of the emergence of a nuclear threat. The second is reorganizing our forces and reorganizing our strategy to deal with new kinds of military threats which we face in the world today to learn how we can most appropriately use military power to deal with those threats. And the third is managing the drawdowns which are going on in our nation today and going on in the nations of most of the countries represented here today. Now I want to talk about each of these three changes that are under way. Let me start off by talking first of all about what we can do to prevent the reemergence of the nuclear threat. I have lived my entire adult life with the threat, with a cloud of nuclear war hanging over my head, with the threat of nuclear extinction. And now with the ending of the Cold War, that cloud has drifted away, but the weapons which are still present have not drifted away. They are still very real and exist, very much exist. And therefore it is our task, that of the people who are managing the national security affairs in the world, to keep that cloud from drifting back and becoming a threat of nuclear holocaust again. So the principal task we have in managing the change in the world today is to prevent that threat of nuclear extinction from drifting back again. One of the specific tasks we have in that regard [includes?] the specific programs we have under way for helping Russia dismantle its nuclear weapons. These activities are under way with the resources and the funds of the U.S. Defence Department. Monies that would at one time have gone into building defensive weapon systems are now going to helping dismantle the nuclear weapons which we otherwise would have been defending against. This is what I have described to our Congressmen as defence by other means, because it provides the same result, namely protecting us against the threat of this horrible weapon. But it does it in a different way than we have traditionally done. A few months ago I was in the Ukraine overseeing the program we have with Russia and Ukraine and Kazakhstan to help dismantle these nuclear weapons. And I asked the president, then President Kravchuk, and the Defense Minister, then Defense Minister Redesky, -- both of those people have changed since the time of my trip -- but that was the president and the defenses minister at that time. I asked them if I could see this program in action, and they agreed and arranged for me to go down to a city called Pervomaisk. Pervomaisk is where one of the most modern ICBM sites in the world is located. It has what we call the SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles which are based there, and at that site there are almost a hundred missiles comprising approximately eight hundred nuclear war heads. So this is a formidable, a formidable military force, and we have a program under way for helping the Russians and Ukrainians dismantle all of those sites. The objective is that by mid-year next year all eight hundred of those war heads will have been dismantled and reduced down to the basic uranium and plutonium components. While I was there, my host allowed me to go down into the missile control center. We got into an elevator and went down twelve stories and walked along concrete lined quarters and ended up in the room in which there are two soldiers whose job it was to launch the missiles. They went through a practice launch for me, and I have to say that was unnerving to stand there and watch these two young men, who between them controlled eight hundred nuclear war heads, all of them aimed at cities and targets in the United States and go through the countdown for a practice launch right up to the last instant. That brought home to me the full horror of the threat which was posed by these kinds of weapons, indeed not just to the United States but to whole world. We then left the control site and went out to the missile silo location and we went to one of the silos. They had the lid up and we stood at the rim of the silo and peered down. My favorite picture in all of the time I have been in office so far is the picture that was taken as we, the Minister of Defence of Ukraine and I, peered down into the silo, because in the silo the missile was still there but all the war heads were gone, because just the previous week they had been removed and sent to the dismantling center. Of course, we knew that it had happened, but it was comforting to stand there and actually see the missing nuclear bombs. With the assistance of the U.S. funds and some U.S. equipment, all of these war heads had been taken out of the missile site, transported to the dismantling factory, and were in the process of being dismantled.

Another important initiative that we have under way relates, which, I think, directly to this question of the nuclear threat, is the military-to-military contacts that we continue to develop with these nations in the former Soviet Union. We have ongoing communications with the military of all of these new nations and an .[indistinct].... to encourage their pursuit of democratic reform. This exercise which I described to you in Tozkoja this week, was a very good example of one of these programs that are under way now. This is real confidence building that takes place when the military from different nations work together and exercises come together in educational facilities, learn to know each other, and come to develop some confidence in the military of the other nations.

A second challenge facing me as the Secretary of Defense, is the need to reformulate policies for the use of military power or the threat of use the military power in this new world in which we now live. During the cold war, a Secretary of Defense never had any trouble understanding what his mission was. His mission was to provide the deterrence to the Soviet Union, and he had to have enough conventional military power and enough nuclear military power so that he could certify that he had that level of deterrence provided. Today the problems we face are very different and in some ways more complex. On the one hand they do not threaten the survival of our nation. But on the other hand they do affect our national security interest, and they are very real. They are occurring every day. The second day after had I had been appointed as Secretary of Defense, a bomb went off on the marketplace in Sarajevo and killed dozens of civilians and brought a crisis to the fore as to what it was we, the United States, we NATO, could do to mitigate the violence and the fighting that was going on in Bosnia. It did seem to me that every week since that time there has been another crisis develop that required some sort of assistance and some sort of effort of the U.S. military. Some of them from countries, I have to admit, I didn't know where they were located when I first of them. Rwanda, for example. When the crisis in Rwanda emerged last spring I had to go to the map to determine its location. So this characterizes the very different problems we are facing today. I just had a press conference, and the first question they asked me was "When are you going to invade Haiti?" And I can assure you that my predecessors as the Secretary of Defense never spent an hour of their tenure worrying about Haiti. But it is an issue which I have to worry about along with Rwanda along with Sarajevo and Bosnia.

Let me talk a little bit about Bosnia, because that is a very real problem facing Europe today. It's a problem in which NATO is involved, Russia is involved, all of us are involved trying to mitigate the violence going on in that country. Let me describe the United States role and objectives in Bosnia. It typifies the very different kind of problems I face as the Secretary of Defense. The U.S. faces the use or threat of use of military power. First of all, we are not in a war, we the United States, we NATO, are not in a war in Bosnia and don't plan to get into war in Bosnia. Our objectives there are twofold. First of all it is a diplomatic mission to try to bring about a peace agreement in that country and we are working hard diplomatically to do that. Secondly we are working to try to reduce the level of violence and mitigate the effects of the violence while we are working on this peace agreement. In that latter objective, reducing the effects and mitigating the effects of the violence, the problem has been turned over to the military. It's an ironic twist that the military which has developed weapon systems with capabilities of inflicting violence is now being asked to use that capability to reduce the level and reduce the effects of the violence. We are doing it in the United States as part of a NATO task force in several different ways. First of all, we are using our military airlift capability to deliver humanitarian supplies and relief, food, medicine, blankets. We have an airlift going on, we have had an airlift going for over a year which rivals the Berlin Airlift. The only airlift which has delivered more supplies, has been the famous Berlin Airlift of an earlier era. But this one rivals it in terms of scope and the number of flights, the number of airplanes involved, and so on. Besides that humanitarian effort, we are using our military to lower the level of violence and the fighting,

and we are doing that pursuant to both U.N. and NATO resolutions in three different areas.

First of all we are enforcing a no-fly zone in order to stop to aerial bombardment of cities in Bosnia. That we have been doing for more than a year, and it is has worked. There has been no aerial bombardment of the cities in Bosnia except once, just once the Serbs brought out their airplanes in defiance of this ban and actually started bombing a Bosnia city By the time the second and third bomb had dropped, NATO aircraft were there and shot down four of the six airplanes, Serb airplanes, that were doing it. They have never repeated that violation. So this is a clear case of where the selective and carefully modulated use of military power, in this case a threat of the use of military power, has greatly lowered the level of violence, because it will work. If not for that, there is no doubt that cities in Bosnia would be undergoing constant aerial bombardment. Secondly, last February we decided to extend that no-bombardment policy to artillery bombardment, first in Sarajevo and then in later in Gorazde. This was in response to the shelling of Sarajevo that was taking place, had been taking place. In more than a year, there were something like ten thousand casualties from the shelling that was going on in Sarajevo up to that point. NATO made an ultimatum. It said, there will be no more shelling into the city, and moreover you will not even be allowed to bring heavy weapons into the area unless they are under U.N. control. From that day to this, we have been enforcing that ultimatum, and the shelling of Sarajevo -- with a few minor exceptions -- the shelling of Sarajevo has stopped. So that has been a second effect.

And finally, we are providing close air support to the United Nations ground forces if any of them come under attack. Still, all of these ways we are working in Bosnia is not enough, we have not brought an end to the war in Bosnia, but we have succeeded in greatly reducing the level of violence. I believe that we probably have saved tens of thousands of lives in the last year there by the combination of these various actions I have described.

Let me go now to the third and last area of change. In many ways it poses one of the greatest management challenges for me as the Secretary of Defence, and that is the fact that we are going through a major drawdown of our forces and a major reduction of our forces. That's true in the United States, it's also true in most of the nations are represented in this audience today. In the case of the United States a way of measuring that reduction is in terms of the budget. From the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties we have had a reduction in the defence budget of about forty percent, corrected for inflation. That is, forty percent measured in real terms. That's a very substantial reduction. This is the so-called peace dividend that goes with the ending of the Cold War. Now some of that peace dividend can be directly measured by changes in the need for a military. For example, we had more than three hundred thousand military personnel in Europe as recently as a few years ago, and that number is heading towards a hundred thousand. The reason being, we believe we no longer need those three hundred thousand personnel here because they were here primarily to deter or repel a short-warning attack from the now defunct Warsaw Pact. In consequence then, we have been able to make a reduction in the number of military forces we have had. We are going now from a total of 2.1 million down to about 1.5 million, about a one-third reduction, which has been happening now for the last four or five years and has about another year to go before it will be completed. The main management challenge is to make this reduction in such a way that the military forces that come out at the other end [are adequate?], even though they are smaller.

I want to give you two quick stories just to suggest that that's not going to be an easy task. After the Second World War, when we had what was possibly the most powerful military force in the world, we demobilized it; and we demobilized it in such a way that just five years later, we were almost pushed off the Korean Peninsula by a third-rate regional power, known as North Korea. So it's pretty clear we didn't do the demobilization appropriately at that time. But our army has a motto as a result of that, and that is "No more Task Force Smiths." Task Force Smith was the name of the task force which was sent in. American forces were sent in to South Korea to defend, and they were badly mauled by the

North Korean army because they weren't ready either in equipment or in training. They were not ready. After the Vietnam War we had another substantial drawdown, and just five years after that drawdown began, in 1979 I believe it was, General Meyer[?] proclaimed that we had a hollow army. And he was right. He was referring to the same effect, namely, we had at that time well over two million personnel on our military forces. We had cut the budget to such an extent that we could not provide adequate equipment or training or the ability to do exercises, and so they became hollow. So we demonstrated how to do it wrong. Now the question is, Can we do it right the third time around? During the Second World War, Winston Churchill was talking with one of his aides who was complaining about the way the Americans were running an operation, and Winston was trying to [explain?], and he said, "You can always count on the Americans to do the right thing....after having first exhausted all other alternatives". And I'd like to believe that we have exhausted the alternatives on how to do a military drawdown. And we are going to do it right this time. The key to doing it right, by the way, is, we cannot make the very obvious mistake we made after the Vietnam War of having a forty percent reduction in budget and maintain the level of force at the same level. It does not take a military genius to predict that if you reduce your budget forty percent and you keep your force level the same, you are not going to have enough money to arm them, equip them, and train them. So we are bringing our force down, and our objective is, as at whatever level the force is, it will be in a high state of readiness and a high level of capability. And that is an objective by which I am willing to be measured at the end of my term in office. Of course, we are not the only NATO nation that is restructuring our armed forces. All of the nations are doing it to some degree or other, certainly including Germany. Today Germany is surrounded by friendly nations rather than adversaries, and it is a leader in the effort to integrate the East and West into a Europe committed to democracy and rooted in the independence of states and the security of borders.

So more perhaps than the other NATO nations military, the Bundeswehr faces a task that is fundamentally different than it was during the Cold War when it was forced primarily to focus on defending the borders. The Bundeswehr must bear all the capabilities to deal with the problems of today's world: regional end ethnic conflicts, peace keeping and humanitarian crises. It is part of NATO or some other multinational force, and it must continue to reach out to its former adversaries in Eastern and Central Europe to help them develop democratic militaries. Part of that is going on at this very academy, and this is another example of what is called defence by other means. The German military certainly has a unique insight into the problems facing the armed forces of the newly independent states of the Central and Eastern Europe.

It has had direct experience of how difficult it is for soldiers to make the transition from communism to democracy. You can be proud of your success in incorporating the former East German forces into the united German military as a very difficult task performed, I believe, with great skill. Now your armed forces look to you to show the foresight, the leadership and the flexibility needed to adapt the Bundeswehr to the new world. Americans have full confidence that you will succeed. We know that the Bundeswehr is well equipped, well trained and well-led, thanks in no small measure to this academy. Over the years the U.S. and German armed forces have worked closely together and developed a highly professional and very effective working relationship. But Americans have also developed close ties with the German people, and that was in no small measure a result of the fifteen million Americans who were here in the more than four decades since the second World War. For these people it was their second home, and while they were here the German people opened their hearts and their homes to them. Well there will be fewer Americans in Germany now that the Cold War is over. The ceremony in Berlin yesterday gave very emotional testimony to that fact, but while the number of U.S. troops in Germany is diminished, the need for Germany and America to work side by side for peace and stability, U.S.-German military ties remain a key element of our security policy.

I'd like to end my talk now with my favorite quote which I adapt to the Cold War, and this is from the British novelist Graham Greene. He said that there always comes a moment in time when the door opens and lets the future in. The ending of the Cold War has opened such a door; the future is out there waiting to come in. By our actions, our actions in breaking down walls, tearing down walls and building bridges, we can shape that future to build a better world for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you.

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Questions following the address.

Q: [Note: all questions are paraphrased] Would you see the enlargement of NATO to the East as a different form of defense?

A: Yes! [Laughter]... The question is not "whether", but "when" and "how"? Who?-- I think, clearly the Visegrad nations are the earliest candidates for expansion. That's not to rule out other nations, to say they are the earliest candidates. "When" is not is not for several years. It is going to take some substantial period of time for these nations to develop the training and the capability to make them valuable members of NATO. Membership in NATO is a two-way street. It's not just that they get our security guarantee which is handed to somebody as a gift. They have to bring something to the Alliance. "How?" How this is going to happen is through the Partnership for Peace. Partnership for Peace has value in and of itself - doing exercises, various confidence building measures, but also it serves as a valuable road to NATO. Training exercises, joint operations, the access to the schools, the access to the procedures -- all of these things are going to lead to a nation being able to develop this capability, to become an effective NATO member....

Q: [Will the United States be willing to conduct peace-keeping or peace-restoring operations alone?]

A: In general I would say we will seek partners for any peace-keeping operation, but I do not believe that we will disqualify ourselves from any peace-keeping operation if we do not find a partner. We believe it is far preferable to have partners, and we will always seek them out, but we will not rule out peace-keeping operations if we have to go it alone. In a slightly related issue, which is providing humanitarian relief, we decided to go into Rwanda to provide humanitarian relief, and we did it initially on our own. Once we started that operation, we solicited support of the German government, the Finnish government, all of our friends and allies....

Q: [You said Germany is now surrounded by friends. Then what purpose have U.S. combat troops in Germany today?]

A: They are not here to repel an invasion, coming through the invasion through the Fulda Gap, which is why we had them there for a long time. Let me answer the question first elliptically, and then a little more directly. They are here -- we have a hundred thousand troops in Europe, mostly here in Germany -- for the same reason we have about a hundred thousand troops in the Western Pacific. Each of these areas of the world is a vital national security interest to us. In each of them we believe we can achieve these national security interests best through a military presence.... We have often had the question asked why we have a hundred thousand in the Pacific theater, and it is too glib to say because of the threat from North Korea. The fact is, even if North and South Korea were to be pacified or to be reunified, we would still plan to that military force in the region, where we think it is a force for stability and security in that region. Both in Europe and in the rim of the Pacific we have economic interests involved and hundreds of billions of dollars and tens of thousands of our citizens living and working in that area, so we have important national security interests, and the stability of those regions is important. I believe, the President believes; the presence of U.S. troops in Europe, and the presence of troops in the Pacific contribute to that stability. The leaders of most of the nations in those areas believe that too. Of course it takes both sets of beliefs, it takes both President Clinton and Chancellor Kohl believing that's true.....

Q: [Does deterrence still work? It seems that small aggressors are not impressed by deterrence.]

A: I am, first of all, not willing to concede that deterrence does not work in small conflicts. I believe that it does. When doesn't work, in conflicts small or large, is when you are dealing with an adversary who is either irrational or has nothing to lose. And it doesn't work when the threat of force is not a credible threat. When any of those situations develops, and you are not really prepared to fight, you'd better get yourself out of that situation. That situation is essentially what happened to us in Somalia where we had sufficient military power to annihilate the clans of Mogadishu, even without sending more troops over. But we were not prepared to do it, we were not willing to use our power that way. And when it became clear that they would not deterred by an empty threat, and when they felt that they had nothing to lose by challenging our military power, we decided to leave. And did. We decided that we were not willing to use this power in an urban area and indiscriminately kill civilians. You could not tell the difference between civilians and the militia. They were not deterred. They recognized rightly that we were not going to use our power. So that's one example where deterrence does not work. We are seeing another possible example in Haiti today, where we have threatened the use of military force to unseat the military regime there. They don't seem to be impressed by that threat. I think in the relatively near future I believe we will become a much more impressive threat, and

we may see it applied. But it is quite clear that -- at this point at least -- this is not exactly deterrence in the classical sense of the word.... But I think deterrence is still a strategy that is available to us and will be used in many instances in the future.....

Q: [Could you give us some ideas about the future development of the Cuban crisis?]

A: Let me describe the Cuban crisis the way I saw, speaking now as the Secretary of Defense rather than as the Secretary of State. The Cuban government, for a complex set of reasons, decided to stop prohibiting their citizens from getting on boats and leaving the country. That revealed a large pent up demand for people to leave the country -- we have estimates that as many as a million Cubans want to leave the island: That is a lot of people and boats. What had been deterring them from that for years was first of all, the government was policing them and stopping the boats. And secondly, their economy wasn't so bad. Through most of the 60s and 70s, the economy was being subsidized by the Soviet Union. Once that subsidy was removed, -- it happened in the early 90s -- their economy was doomed to be a failure. The much talked about U.S. embargo causing the problem is really a second order effect. Basically they had a failed economy -- which is basically a one crop economy, sugar, sugar is now a drug on the world market unless someone is willing to pay an inflated price for it, which the Russians used to do but aren't doing anymore. So they are in bad conditions, and many people want to leave the country, and they only just recently decided to allow that to happen. Now, that's the background... [gap as tape is turned over]... Those boats were steel drums lashed together, almost none (of the boats) with any power power. They drifted out into the Gulf Stream, and the Gulf Stream just carries them out to the Atlantic Ocean, where they will die of exposure in time. Nevertheless, thousands of them started doing that. At that point we were confronted, now I'm back to myself as Secretary of Defense, we were confronted with three alternatives: to let them drift off to sea and die -- and for reasons which I think are obvious we decided not to do that....The second alternative would be to pick them up and bring them to Florida to settle in the Southern states of the U.S. And we decided not to do that. That was a decision which is not too difficult to understand, particularly if you believe that the number of these refugees might accumulate to as many as a million. That would be an enormous economic strain. It is a problem somewhat similar to what West Germany was facing when the East German people were leaving, escaping....before unification. The third alternative is the one we chose, and that is to pick them up and bring them to the safe haven, a refuge, and care for them. We have picked up to date, the last figure I saw, was over 30,000. We have constructed tent cities on naval base Guantanamo and are housing and feeding them there. In the meantime we are conducting negotiations with the Cuban government to persuade them to stop letting people go out on boats. And we are under substantial

pressure to lift the embargo. Our position on the embargo right along is that an embargo has nothing to do in our mind with the immigration. It has to which is the nature of the government, and we are willing to trade off the embargo for free elections in Cuba. And that's the incentive we've offered the Cuban government right along: when you start moving towards free elections, we will lift the embargo. In the meantime we are working with them on ways of reducing the flow of immigrants. We had hoped that when it became clear that the immigrants were not coming to the United States but go to Guantanamo that that would have a deterrent effect--which it has not. Apparently the situation in Cuba is bad enough, and they don't mind the prospect of living in the tent city believing that even though they are in the tent city that sooner or later they will get free passage to the United States. So it is a difficult problem, and we are treating it like a search and rescue operation -- how to deal with thousands of people adrift at sea who would perish unless we rescue them, and basically we felt we had to rescue them, faced with the fact that we could not bring them to the United States....so we have a further requirement to provide tent cities for them.

[End text]